

## ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

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For more information about the Fernald Preserve, contact:

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Fernald Preserve

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*the transformation from a uranium-processing facility to a nature preserve*

Fernald Preserve



At the Fernald Preserve, visitors get the rare opportunity to see a unique set of interconnected and interdependent ecosystems. In addition to being one of the largest manmade wetland communities in the state of Ohio, the site features large tracts of upland forests, tallgrass prairies in early stages of growth, and a lengthy riparian corridor.

What once served as a uranium-processing facility operated by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and its predecessor agencies is now a 1,050-acre site that has undergone a massive environmental cleanup and ecological restoration. The Fernald property has been cleaned to standards established by the site's neighbors and surrounding communities. These cleanup standards were approved by both the U.S. and Ohio Environmental Protection Agencies as being protective of human health and the environment.

The property's transition is an ongoing process. It has involved a 20-year multibillion-dollar environmental cleanup project that complied with all applicable environmental laws and regulations—at both the federal and state level—for the protection of the public's health and safety. An important phase of the project involves the ecological restoration of the entire site. The \$14-million restoration has been underway for more than 10 years, and only plants and grasses native to southwest Ohio are being used in the process. The goal of the restoration is to turn the property into an undeveloped park with an emphasis on wildlife. The resulting nature preserve, operated by DOE's Office of Legacy Management, is located just 18 miles northwest of downtown Cincinnati. Restoration efforts have created diverse habitats that have attracted numerous types of wildlife that thrive in these areas.

- The Fernald Preserve is home to over 140 acres of wetland habitat, including open water, marshland, wet prairies, retention basins, and mud flats.
- The 400 acres of forests at the Preserve include early, successional, riparian, and mature woodlots.
- Fernald's 360 acres of grassland include tallgrass prairies, savanna, and pasture.

The ecological restoration of the Fernald property is transforming the site into a haven for wildlife. To date, over 170 varieties of birds, ranging from waterfowl and shorebirds to wild turkeys and songbirds, have been observed. A variety of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians also inhabit the preserve.